

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USINT CAIRO

S E C R E T STATE 008399

EXDIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM ALGIERS DATED JANUARY 14, 1974 SENT
ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC INFO BEIRUT, RABAT, TEL AVIV,
TRIPOLI, TUNIS IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T ALGIERS 0086

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, XI, AG
SUBJ: ALGERIAN REACTION TO LIBYAN-TUNISIAN UNITY
ANNOUNCEMENT

REF: ALGIRS 0079

DEPT PASS CAIRO

1. NEGATIVE ALGERIAN PUBLIC REACTION TO LIBYAN-TUNISIAN
UNITY DECLARATION (REFTEL) CAME IMMEDIATELY AFTER
PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE HAD MET WITH HIS CLOSEST ADVISORS.
CONSULTATIONS ARE NOW UNDERWAY HERE WITH REPS FROM
BOTH MOROCCO AND TUNISIA. BEFORE BOUMEDIENE DECIDES
HOW FAR HE WILL GO IN OPPOSING LIBYA-TUNISIA MERGER,
HE WILL PROBABLY STUDY REACTION FROM ARAB WORLD
SECRET

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AND ELSEWHERE AND TAKE SOUNDINGS WITH THOSE WHO
SHARE HIS SKEPTICISM.

2. OUR USUAL SOURCE OF INFO ON SUCH HIGH LEVEL

ALGERIAN DELIBERATIONS, PRESIDENTIAL CONFIDANT
ZEGHAR, LEFT ALGIERS EARLY MORNING OF DAY
FOLLOWING MERGER ANNOUNCEMENT. HOWEVER, FROM OUR
PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF BOUMDEIENE'S VIEW OF QADHAFI'S
UNITY POLICY, WE ANTICIPATE THAT HE WILL BE EXTREMELY
SUSPICIOUS OF THE BOURGUIBA-QADHAFI AGREEMENT AND WILL
LET HIS IMAGINATION RUN FAR IN ENVISIONING DANGERS
CONFRONTING ALGERIA. SIX MONTHS AGO BOUMEDIENNE SAW
POSSIBILITY THAT QADHAFI'S UNITY POLICY WOULD BRING
EGYPTIAN THREAT TO SOUTHEASTERN FRONTIER OF ALGERIA.
AT THAT TIME HE MIGHT HAVE WELCOMED LINE UP OF LIBYA
WITH TUNISIA AS WAY TO DELIVER LIBYA FROM EGYPTIANS
AND BRING IT INTO MAGHRED ORIT. NOW, HOWEVER,
UNEXPECTED MERGER THREATENS TO REMOVE TUNISIA FROM
LONG RANGE ALGERIAN INFLUENCE AND PERHAPS AT A LATER
STAGE OF UNITY BRING EGYPTIAN FRONTIER TO WHOLE
LENGTH OF ALGERIA'S EASTERN BORDER.

3. TUNISIAN AND OTHER EMISSARIES WILL TRY TO
REMOVE ALGERIAN FEARS, BUT IF BOUMEDIENE IS NOT
SATISFIED WITH THEIR EXPLANATIONS HE MAY WELL TRY TO
SABOTAGE MERGER. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT ASSETS
ALGERIANS HAVE IN TUNISIA AND LIBYA TO ACCOMPLISH
THIS BUT RECALL THAT IN PAST THEY HAVE BEEN IN
TOUCH WITH MEMBERS OF LIBYAN RCC WHO WERE REPUTEDLY
PLOTING AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER TO OVERTHROW QADHAFI.
EAGLETON
UNQUOTE RUSH

SECRET

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